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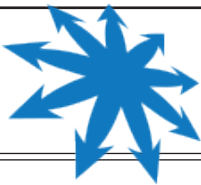
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14-20, 2021

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

VOL. 45 • NO.08 • FREE

STATE & LOCAL PG 2

BATON ROUGE PREPARING FOR 19TH ANNUAL GALA ON THE BLUFF



NEWS PG 3

BRAC RELEASES PUBLIC POLICY ON CATS PERFORMANCE, FUTURE GOALS

SU Board of Supervisors announces search committee for president-chancellor

The Southern University Board of Supervisors announced the search committee for the position of president-chancellor of the Southern University System and Southern University and A&M College. The committee, a diverse group of stakeholders, will assist the Board in selecting a replacement for retiring President-Chancellor Ray L. Belton.



President-Chancellor Ray L. Belton announced in July his plans to retire effective Fall 2022.

Belton announced in July his plans to retire effective Fall 2022.

The search committee will screen applicants and select finalists for the position to be considered by the SU Board of Supervisors.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE:

- Tim Barfield, president of CSRS Inc.
- Alfred Harrell, CEO of the Southern University System Foundation
- Gayle Benson, owner of the New Orleans Saints and New Orleans Pelicans
- Sandra Brown, dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health at Southern University and A&M College
- Nzhada Harris, president of the Student Bar Association at Southern University Law Center
- Lee Jackson, chairman and CEO of Jackson Offshore Operations LLC
- Irving Matthews, president of The Matthews Automotive Group
- Cynthia Ramirez, professor and president of the faculty senate at Southern University at New Orleans
- LaQuitta Thomas, national president of the Southern University Alumni Federation
- Warner Thomas, president and CEO of Ochsner Health

See **SEARCH**, on page 7

"THIS IS A BIG DEAL" Gov. Edwards announces multi-billion dollar investment Projects for Louisiana



Governor John Bel Edwards made an announcement about major economic development in the Baton Rouge area.

The project will create 170 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$93,000, plus benefits.

On Oct. 14, Governor John Bel Edwards and Air Products' Chairman, President and CEO Seifi Ghasemi announced the company will develop a \$4.5 billion clean energy complex near Burnside in Ascension Parish. This will also be the world's largest permanent carbon dioxide sequestration endeavor to date. Air Products will construct a blue hydrogen manufacturing complex to produce more than 750 million standard cubic feet per day of blue hydrogen, with carbon dioxide from the manufacturing process captured and permanently sequestered. The plant will be the first carbon-capture project in Louisiana for Air Products, a world-



Air Products' Chairman, President and CEO Seifi Ghasemi

leading industrial gas manufacturer that provides hydrogen and other gases to refineries, petrochemical plants and other customers in Louisiana, across the Gulf Coast and around the globe.

The project will create 170 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$93,000, plus benefits. Louisiana Economic Development estimates it

will result in 413 new indirect jobs, for a total of 583 new jobs for Ascension Parish and the Capital Region. Air Products also will retain 334 existing jobs in the state. The company estimates the project will create more than 2,000 construction jobs over three

See **INVESTMENT**, on page 7



President Joe Biden speaks about COVID-19 vaccinations after touring a Clayco Corporation construction site for a Microsoft data center in Elk Grove Village, Ill., Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

Biden pushes widespread vaccinations, vaccine mandate

President Joe Biden addressed the country's coronavirus response Thursday, where he touched on the debate over his sweeping vaccination mandates and the potential approval of booster shots.

The Biden administration's vaccination mandate would make employers with 100 or more workers require coronavirus vaccinations or institute weekly virus testing. Some employers nationwide have already instituted their own mandates.

"Every day, we see more businesses implement vaccination requirements and the mounting data shows that they work," Biden said. "Businesses and organizations are implementing requirements are seeing their vaccination rates rise by an average of 20% or more to well over 90% the number

See **BIDEN**, on page 5

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Despite Misinformation and Distractions, Biden-Harris Accomplishing Black Agenda

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire
Senior National Correspondent

The \$4.2 billion received in 2021 by historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) represents the most considerable single-year federal government funding from any administration in U.S. history.

And it's not even close. "We see more and more misinformation. When you see reports that the Biden administration is cutting funding to HBCUs by \$30 billion, it is patently false," Cedric Richmond, the senior advisor to the President, told a group of publishers from the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

Richmond, who also serves as the White House Office of Public Engagement director, remarked that the deliberate mis-

information published by news outlets and posted on social media is meant to undermine the President and Democrats.

Notably, the dubious accounts aim to suppress the Black vote further, Richmond declared.

"It's being pushed around so young African Americans and people who went to HBCUs would get discouraged and say that there's no difference from President Biden and President Trump, or that Trump did more for HBCUs," Richmond asserted.

"Funding for HBCUs is usually less than \$1 billion per year," he noted.

"Just this year alone, we've given HBCUs \$4.2 billion, and because of that, some HBCUs are financially capable of forgiven student debt right now. A lot of them are making investments in

See **BLACK AGENDA**, on page 3



Cedric Richmond, the Senior Advisor to President Joe Biden, told the Black Press the administration has done more for HBCUs and the cause of leveling the playing field for African Americans, than any prior administration/ Mark Mahoney, Dream In Color Photography

WEATHER

MON. 10/18
Partly Cloudy
High 76°

TUE. 10/19
Partly Cloudy
High 80°

WED. 10/20
Partly Sunny
High 82°

THUR. 10/21
Mostly Sunny
High 82°

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BR preparing for 19th Annual Gala On The Bluff

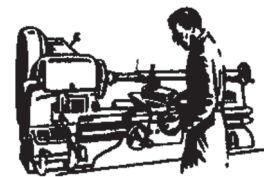
*Morris Day and
The Time this
year Headlined
performer*

BATON ROUGE, La—Southern University is well known for putting on some very prestigious events for its students, alumni, and supporters. Every year the university's School of Business holds its Gala on the Bluff (GOTB) Fundraiser which is a signature event and is the college's primary scholarship fundraising initiative. Over the past 18 years, the fundraiser has been awarded to incoming freshmen and existing students with over \$650,000 in support. The semi-formal event challenges elite's to put on their best attire while enjoying live performances. This year's performers are sure to get the crowd moving with the popular music sounds of Morris Day and The Time. Attended by more than 600 guests each year, the GOTB acknowledges deserving students who demonstrate the need for assistance to help pursue their dreams of earning a college education.

The success of the annual Scholarship Gala is driven by the generosity of our community partners and friends. We encourage sponsorships to make a difference for current and future generations by helping to sponsor this event and/or attending.

This event was derived by members of the College of Business Advisory Council in 2002 as a way to build institutional awareness. The Gala on the Bluff Fundraiser will be held on October 22, 2021, at 7:30 PM CST and will be located at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Baton Rouge, LA. To purchase a sponsored ticket you may contact Southern University's College of Business Department by calling (225)-771-5640. Event tickets are also available at www.galaonthebluff.com

READER INFORMATION



How to Reach Us

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Email brweeklypress@yahoo.com

The office is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday and located at 4910 Montecello Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70814

Correction Policy

The Baton Rouge Weekly Press strives to be fair and accurate. The newspaper corrects any significant errors of fact brought to the attention of the editor. If you think an error has been made, call 225-775-2002

The Weekly Press

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Mayor Broome, President Ourso Announce Bayou Manchac Project

BATON ROUGE, LA – East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and Iberville President Mitch Ourso announced today a proposal to improve drainage along Bayou Manchac at the border of the two parishes. Broome and Ourso proposed a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement to clear and snag Bayou Manchac from Highway 30 to the Alligator Bayou Flood Control Gate. This proposal would complement a similar agreement between East Baton Rouge and Ascension Parish, with the ultimate goal of improving drainage along almost the entire length of Bayou Manchac to the Amite River.



Mayor Sharon Weston Broome

“The leaders of East Baton Rouge, Iberville and Ascension Parishes are stepping up to bring meaningful drainage improvements to our citizens,” said Mayor Broome. “President Ourso and I believe a regional approach benefits all of our communities.”

“Bayou Manchac is the only drainage way for East Iberville Parish and I am committed to finding solutions for my citizens who live there,” said President Ourso. “Drainage for East Iberville Parish will only improve with downstream initiatives to address water flow, and that’s why it is so important to work collaboratively across parish lines.”

The proposed project next heads to the EBR Metro Council and Iberville Parish Council for approval.

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City of Baker Park walking track gets new look people, are loving it



“The re-opening of the improved Baker City Park walking path is just one of the efforts underway to display the City’s commitment to keeping families and neighborhoods healthy. As our city continue to grow, it’s crucial to provide residents with access to recreational opportunities in open green spaces that promote wellness while making residents feel safe and at home.”

BAKER, La. — In case you missed it, the Baker City Park walking track has gotten a new look and people are loving it! As you can see in the photos, the recently completed asphalt surface is a great new addition and welcomed by the numerous citizens that enjoy walking on this track every day.

This walking track has been a high priority to Mayor Waites, was brought to fruition with the assistance of Councilman Robert Young. Together they

championed this cause for the community and produced the results that had been asked for.

When asked Mayor Waites said “The re-opening of the improved Baker City Park walking path is just one of the efforts underway to display the City’s commitment to keeping families and neighborhoods healthy. As our city continue to grow, it’s crucial to provide residents with access to recreational opportunities in open green spaces that promote wellness while making residents feel safe and at home.”

Everyone knows that we all love to have more parks and recreation options, but many people do not think about the role parks and recreation play in economic and business development for a city. In the “Promoting Parks and Recreation’s Role in Economic Development” study performed by George Mason University for the National Recreation and Park Association it was found that promoting parks and recreation’s role in economic development defines the role and lays out a strategy

for growth that is based upon quality of life and quality of place. Among the report’s key findings are the following:

- Quality-of-life considerations which include high-quality parks and recreation play a supporting role in site-location decisions, are highly important to firms that prioritize talent attraction and retention.
- Firms looking to locate office operations and to recruit employees regionally, nationally or even internationally, are more likely to prioritize quality-of-life factors in site-location decisions
- Park and recreation agencies contribute to the economic development process through:
 - Business attraction: They strengthen product development and enhance community “curb appeal”
 - Business retention and expansion: Active engagement with companies and workers can influence business expansion decisions and attract new residents to a community
 - Talent attraction: Many business owners first learn about

places as visitors or tourists; positive recreational experiences can influence both business and talent recruitment

- Park and recreation leaders (locally this is COBRA, led by Gerald Collins) become more involved in their city’s economic development planning and activities by building new alliances to promote the value of parks and recreation. Key players that offer opportunities for new partnerships include:
 - Other municipal departments that shape the quality of life (public schools, public libraries and transit agencies)
 - Shapers of the built environment (private-sector developers, downtown development organizations, business improvement districts and metropolitan planning organizations)
- In the overall strategic vision for the City of Baker, Mayor Waites has a core belief that integrates health and wellness, with access to parks

See **TRACK**, on page 5

BRAC Releases Public Policy Commentary on CATS Performance and Future Goals



BATON ROUGE, La. – The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) today released a public policy commentary analyzing the Capital Area Transit System’s (CATS’) performance against published goals of its current millage cycle, and the agency’s plans for the upcoming renewal period. CATS’ 10.6-mill renewal will be on the November 13 ballot. The commentary is attached and available at brac.org/research.

“The upcoming millage renewal represents nearly 60% of CATS’ annual budget,” said Trey Godfrey, senior vice president of policy for BRAC. “It is important that the business community make an informed decision on this critical service with as much information as possible.”

The commentary compares CATS’ performance against a slate of promises made in 2011, and highlights the priorities and goals the agency will pursue with a renewal of its millage.

Despite a spate of management and oversight challenges early in the current millage cycle, CATS has regained its footing in the past several years and has either achieved the performance goal or substantially closed service gaps identified as part of its 2011 plan.

BRAC notes that CATS currently posts monthly performance measures on some of its goals on its website, and recommends that all metrics in the strategic plan be tracked and published online and aggregated annually for public release.

BRAC will announce its position on the CATS renewal in the coming week.

BLACK AGENDA from page 1

their campuses.

“We still want to double or triple funding over the next ten years to invest in their facilities. We’re going to do that, but there’s been no administration ever to invest in HBCUs more than us.”

The former Congressional Black Caucus Chair spent the bulk of the day on Wednesday, October 13, with the Black Press of America.

He appeared at 7:30 a.m. on the NNPA’s live breaking news program, “Let It Be Known,” before sitting for an 11:30 a.m. livestream interview with NNPA Chair Karen Carter Richards and NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Dr. Chavis later conducted a one-on-one interview with Richmond inside the White House for his PBS-TV and PBS-World show, “The Chavis Chronicles.”

The Louisiana-native spelled out several of the many initiatives and programs that the Biden-Harris administration has implemented that benefit the Black community.

He also noted the various strategies the administration has engaged in protecting voting rights and advancing homeownership in the Black community.

He said the President’s Build Back Better plan includes creating

See **BLACK AGENDA**, on page 5



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RELIGION

Church Without Walls welcomes chart topping gospel singer, Earnest Pugh as its new Artist-in-Residence

The Church Without Walls, the Houston, Texas-based ministry with three campuses and a congregation of nearly 25,000, has announced gospel singer, songwriter, and author, Earnest Pugh, as its new artist-in-residence. For over two decades, Pugh has been known across the globe for his deep catalogue of inspiring songs that have earned him 50 million digital streams and over a dozen Billboard Gospel Airplay chart hits, including his three no. 1 smashes, "I Need Your Glory," "God Wants to Heal You," and his signature tune, "Rain on Us."

"When I received the call from the Director of Worship and Arts, Kenneth Myles, I was blown away," Pugh says. "Their music department is known and respected across the country for their great level of ministry but above all I have the utmost

admiration and respect for Pastor Dr. Ralph Douglas West. He, in my opinion, is one of the most prolific preachers, professors and authors in the world. I view this as the top ministerial staff position that's ever been offered to me. Accepting a position of this magnitude, is truly my honor." As Artist-in-Residence, Pugh will collaborate with the music department staff and he will perform musical selections on the 4th Sunday of each month at the Queenston Campus, beginning on Sunday, October 24th @ 8 AM.



Earnest Pugh

When God Distresses a Nation

Hard times are a merciful call to repent

BY DR. TONT EVANS

We are in the midst of a series of pandemics. We began 2020 with the coronavirus pandemic. Then we had the death of George Floyd, which led to a racial pandemic, and that was followed by the economic and political pandemics, which still plague us to this moment. In every direction we look, there is chaos, conflict and instability. In the Book of 2 Chronicles, we find a similar situation. "In those times there was no peace for him who went out or him who came in, because many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city" (2 Chronicles 15:5-6).

With all this chaos, I would have thought that we could blame the devil. But we are hit with a phrase at the end of verse 6: "For God troubled them with every kind of distress." The world was a mess, and instead of it being blamed on the devil, God said, "Blame Me." Now, suffice it to say, if God is your problem, it doesn't matter who you elect to lead you in the worldly realm.

"What we are seeing in our culture, our country, and perhaps even in your home life, is what it looks like when there is a dis-

tance between God and a person or a people. The closer the God of the Bible is to a situation, the more ordered the situation will become. The further God is from a situation, the more chaotic it will be."



Dr. Tont Evans

What you and I have been going through is the passive wrath of God. In the Old Testament there is the active wrath of God, where God directly comes down and expresses His anger against sin. He rains down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. He floods the earth with Noah. He opens up the earth to judge Korah. But in the New Testament, something happens. The death of Jesus Christ reconciles the world to God (2 Corinthians 5), and in this New Covenant age, we have the passive wrath of God.

Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." And in verses 24 and 28, we see the same phrase, "God gave them up." In other words, God released men to live life without Him. The passive wrath of God is not fire and brimstone being rained down like it was in the Old Testament. It is God saying, "Since you don't want Me, I'm going to let you experience life without Me."

So, what we are seeing in our culture, our country, and perhaps even in your home life, is what it looks like when there is a distance between God and a person or a people. The closer the God of the Bible is to a situation, the more ordered the situation will become. The further God is from a situation, the more chaotic it will be. While you may be able to manage a situation because of the education you have, the economics you possess and the people that you know, what you can't get is divine assistance—unless the presence of God is connected to it.

The question is, why did God cause this distress? Second Chronicles 15:3 gives us three reasons.

First, there was no true God. It does not say there was no God. It says there was no true God. The god that they were purporting to worship was not the true God that is in Scripture.

The Bible has a word for this. It is the sin of idolatry. Now, we don't typically have physical idols like some people in other parts of the world. We have American idols. Sophisticated idolatry. For example, some of the racial conflicts that we are having today are happening because race has become an idol.

In Galatians 2, we find the Apostle Peter eating and fellowshiping with the Gentiles—until some Jews showed up. Then he got up and left the Gentiles because he didn't want to offend his race. You can imagine how the Gentiles felt. The Apostle Paul


condemned Peter's actions because he said they insulted the truth of the Gospel.

By the truth of the Gospel, Paul wasn't talking about salvation. Peter was already saved. You see, there's the content of the Gospel that takes you to Heaven, but there's also the scope of the Gospel, which brings Heaven to earth. Peter was messing with the scope of the Gospel. And that's why Paul tells him in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Paul was saying, "Peter, you're too Jewish. My identity is in Christ, and yours should be too."

When we place racial or ethnic identity above our identity in Christ, we forget God's amazing grace. We forget the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us that we might be reconciled to God and reconciled to others. We must die to any identity we have that is independent of Christ.

The idol of politics has also trumped the true God. We have allowed politics to divide the church, as though God rides the backs of donkeys or elephants. In the Book of Joshua, Joshua was about to tackle the walls of Jericho when he looked up and saw a Man with a sword. "Are you for us or for our enemies?" Joshua

See **NATION**, on page 7



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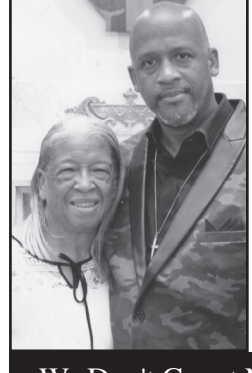
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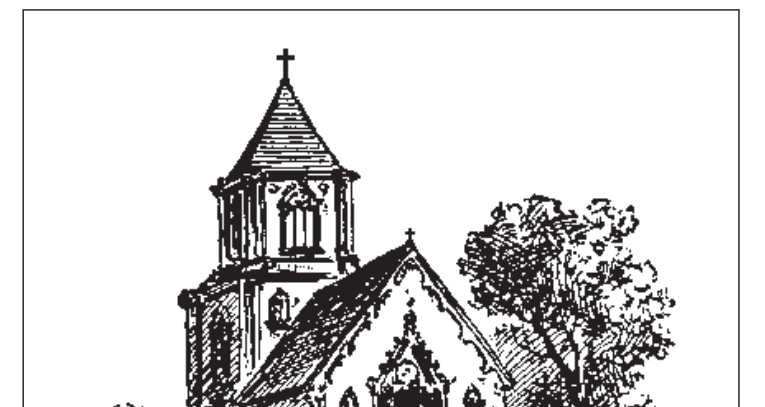
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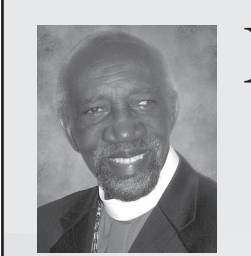
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Bible Study.....	Wed- @ 7:00 PM

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BIDEN from page 1

of employees vaccinated.”

But the mandate prompted swift backlash from governors and employers alike. Earlier this week, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order stopping any entity in the state, including private business, from requiring COVID-19 vaccinations of their employees or consumers.

“Let’s be clear; vaccine mandates should not be another issue that divides us. That’s why we continue to battle the misinformation that’s out there, Biden said. “And companies and communities are stepping up as well to combat this misinformation.”

Biden had ruled out such requirements before taking office in January but said he feels forced into implementing them as a large part of the public has refused to be inoculated and has jeopardized the lives of others and the nation’s economic recovery.

More than 100 million Americans will be subject to vaccine requirements ordered by Biden in the coming weeks. And his administration is encouraging employers to take additional steps voluntarily that would push vaccines on people or subject them to onerous testing requirements.

“There is no other way to beat the pandemic than to get the vast majority of the American people vaccinated,” Biden said in an event promoting the mandates last week. “While I didn’t race to do it right away, that’s why I’ve had to move toward requirements.”

This comes as the Food and Drug Administration is set to meet this week to discuss whether an extra dose of Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 should be dispensed and, if so, who should get them and when.

Ochsner Medical Center first in the state to offer robotic-assisted option for lung biopsy



Ochsner Medical Center

NEW ORLEANS—Ochsner Medical Center (Ochsner) is now offering patients a new, minimally invasive option for lung biopsy using the Ion endoluminal system—a robotic-assisted tool for bronchoscopic biopsy of the lung. On September 28, 2021, Ochsner pulmonologist Susan Gunn, MD performed Louisiana’s first robotic-assisted bronchoscopy using the Ion system. Ochsner is the only hospital in the state offering this technology.

Ion is designed to address a challenging aspect of lung biopsy by enabling physicians to obtain tissue samples from deep within the lung. The Ion system fea-

tures an ultra-thin, ultra-manueverable catheter that navigates far into the peripheral lung, and compared to manual techniques, physicians have unprecedented stability and optimal precision necessary for biopsy.

“This tool allows physicians to reach areas of the lung that were not accessible before,” said Dr. Gunn. “The ability to offer patients this minimally invasive option is a game-changer for lung cancer care, as we can share a diagnosis and treatment plan earlier, resulting in better



outcomes.”

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in men and women in the United States. More people die of lung cancer than breast cancer, prostate cancer and colon cancer combined. In 2021, an estimated 235,000 new cases of lung cancer will be diagnosed. For those most at risk, annual lung cancer screenings improve a patient’s lung cancer survival rate. If a nodule is found when it is small and has not yet spread, it is more likely to be successfully treated. With the new Ion technology, patients who choose Ochsner for their care can benefit from this minimally invasive approach of diagnosis and staging lung cancer while reducing complications.

“Robotic bronchoscopy using the Ion system is a significant advancement in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with lung cancer, as it reduces the complication rate from the traditional diagnostic method from 20-25 percent to only 1-3 percent,” said Brian Pettiford, MD, MBA, FACS, thoracic surgeon, Ochsner Medical Center. “The Ochsner Cancer Institute, in collaboration with our surgical and pulmonology teams, work together to offer state-of-the-art lung cancer care to patients right here at home in Louisiana and across the Gulf South, proving each day that local patients do not have to travel for high quality cancer care.”

Offering patients access to the latest innovative medical advancements, like the Ion system to diagnose lung cancer at its earliest stages, allows Ochsner and Louisiana to take one step closer to our 10-year goal of a healthy state by 2030.

TRACK from page 3

and recreation to create high quality of life and place. The vision he promotes is founded on the Baker Recovery and Resiliency Plan which was developed from direct input from the Baker community.

BRCC awarded \$2.6 million grant from U.S. Department of Education to expand capacity to serve more minority students



BATON ROUGE, LA – Baton Rouge Community College has been awarded a \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) Competitive and Formula Grant Programs to expand higher education opportunities for minority students by removing barriers, improving advisement, strengthening institutional capacity and enhancing student access to programs and services.

The USDOE’s Competitive and Formula Grant Programs makes grant awards to eligible institutions to plan, develop, undertake and implement programs to enhance the institution’s capacity to serve more low- and middle-income minority students. Through the grant, institutions are able to expand higher education opportunities for students by encouraging college preparation and student persistence in secondary school and postsecondary education and by strengthening the financial ability of the institution to serve the academic needs of these students.

“I am grateful that the U.S. Department of Education awarded this grant to Baton Rouge Community College. It speaks to the dedication of our faculty and staff in serving our students and community,” said BRCC Chancellor Dr. Willie E. Smith. “This grant is transformative and aligns with the Center for Undergraduate Student Achievement’s mission to improve the educational outcomes of our students.”

The funding of the grant will be \$537,625 per year, and will total \$2.6 million over five years,

from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2026.

In applying for the USDOE grant, BRCC identified four goals that will strengthen the college to serve the needs of more students in the community. The first goal is to enhance BRCC’s capacity to recruit, enroll, support, and serve more low- and middle-income minority students using evidence-based student-centered approaches. The second goal is to embed faculty development and support structures and processes to increase faculty efficacy and cohesion, improve student outcomes, and raise the quality of instruction across BRCC. The third is to enhance the capacity to leverage technology to expand in-person, remote, and hybrid instructional and support service options for students and to facilitate real-time transparent access to data to support student participation, retention, persistence, completion, graduation, and employment or entrepreneurship. The fourth is to enhance BRCC’s capacity for student and community engagement and leadership.

With more than seventy-degree, certificate, and certified training programs, BRCC is committed to academic excellence, student access, and student success. For more information about BRCC, visit www.mybrcc.edu.

BLACK AGENDA from page 3

jobs and opportunities that have previously escaped the Black community.

Richmond also noted the various executive orders that have aided the cause of leveling the playing field, including the order on advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government.

And while Republican-led states have implemented voter oppression laws and lawmakers have failed to enact federal statutes to protect voting rights, the Democratic National Committee has pledged to invest \$25 million in voter outreach and litigation.

“The President has called for reforming the filibuster, and we’re not letting obstruction slow us down,” Richmond declared.

“We don’t know where we are on the [latest] Senate bill until they have a vote, but we will continue to fight on a three-prong approach. We have doubled the size of the Voting Rights Division in the Department of Justice, we are continuing to file lawsuits over the unconstitutional laws that have passed around the country, and we are fighting them in the courts.”

“So we keep pushing, and we keep doing the things needed to get it done. We’re not going to wait and put all of our eggs in one basket.”

The administration has also put in place programs and mechanisms to ensure that individuals remain in their homes during the pandemic, Richmond relayed.

“We signed an executive

order tasking HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge to review and analyze all barriers to homeownership and systemic racism in housing in the federal government,” Richmond continued.

“Secretary Fudge has embarked on an extensive review of appraisals and other things that determines the worth of a house.

“The President’s goal is to provide federal down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers, which will specifically help people of color. It’s the best way to attain generational wealth.”

Richmond added that the administration also changed federal rules that punished most Black homeowners who didn’t have a clean title to their property because of slavery and systemic racism.

“We don’t have all day to tout all of the things we’ve been able to accomplish over the first [10 months], but we have to show the Black community what we’ve done for them,” Richmond insisted.

“Whether it’s promoting Black maternal health, the equity we put in the pandemic response, banning private prisons, telling U.S. Attorneys to stop with the harshest sentencing recommendations.”

He concluded that “we are investing in community violence and intervention programs using trusted interrupters to resolve disputes for the first time.

“We are investing in re-entry so that those individuals can have a path to success, and when they do, people in the community will see it. All of this is done with being intentional about investing in the African American community.”

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BUSINESS

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. pledges \$1 million to support lifesaving mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., was founded on the principles of uplifting the community through sisterhood, leadership, and service. The Sorority's slogan, "Greater Service, Greater Progress," underscores this commitment. Because of generous donors and partners like Sigma Gamma Rho, families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food — because all a family should worry about is helping their child live.

This pledge includes a three-year sponsorship for the St. Jude Walk/Run during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September. This year's virtual event took place on Saturday, Sept. 25. Participants in the virtual event from across the country used the St. Jude Walk/Run mobile app from the Apple app store and Google Play to enhance their experience.

"Members and affiliates of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. are purpose-driven, compassionate leaders who find St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to be an incredibly meaningful cause because its mission is lifesaving and impacts the world," said Rasheeda S. Liberty, International Grand Basileus & Board Chair, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. "This year's virtual St. Jude Walk/Run was representative of our commitment to the wellness of youth for the past 100 years. Sustainable impact and long-term community engagement are the basis for our \$1 million Centennial gift to support patients and their families seeking treatment from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital."

In 2012, President Barack Obama proclaimed September



Community support remains critical today for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital because unlike any other hospital, the majority of its funding comes from individual contributions. Visit stjude.org/together to make a donation and learn more about how St. Jude is treating and defeating childhood cancer. For information about the virtual St. Jude Walk/Run, visit stjude.org/walkrun.

as National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month to bring awareness to pediatric cancer, which remains the leading cause of death by disease for children under the age of 14. The annual St. Jude Walk/Run celebrates the strides St. Jude is making to better understand, treat and defeat childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases, including sickle cell disease.

"St. Jude and Sigma Gamma Rho are united in supporting children facing catastrophic diseases and saving lives across the globe," said Richard C. Shadyac Jr., President and CEO of ALSAC, the fundraising and awareness organization for St.

Jude Children's Research Hospital. "We're honored to celebrate the selflessness and generosity of Sigma Gamma Rho. Their commitment supports St. Jude's new six-year, \$11.5 billion strategic expansion plan to accelerate groundbreaking research and treatment happening at St. Jude every day."

Community support remains critical today for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital because unlike any other hospital, the majority of its funding comes from individual contributions. Visit stjude.org/together to make a donation and learn more about how St. Jude is treating and defeating childhood cancer. For information

about the virtual St. Jude Walk/Run, visit stjude.org/walkrun.

Incorporated in 1922, Sigma Gamma Rho has served as a home for thousands of collegiate and professional women looking for a place to share inspiring life experiences, learn new things, conquer life challenges, thrive in society, and uplift the community through sisterhood, scholarship, and service. There are more than 500 chapters in the United States, U.S. Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Germany, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates, and in 2022, the Sorority will celebrate its centennial year.

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NATION from page 4

asked. The Man said, "I'm neither on your side, nor am I on their side. I'm Captain of the Lord's army" (Cf. Joshua 5:13-15). This Man—the pre-incarnate Son of God—is saying, "I didn't come to take sides. I came to take over." Our problems are not going to be solved by Air Force One—not if God has caused the distress.

The second reason for the distress is that Israel was "without a teaching priest" (2 Chronicles 15:3). There were plenty of priests, but they were not communicating divine truth. The Word of God was not the standard by which communication took place.

If you come to me and say, "My life is falling apart," I will listen to you. I will then take the Bible and show you what God says about your problem. Then I will join you in asking the Holy Spirit to apply through your obedience the supernatural enablement to deal with whatever issues you are facing. If you bring your family to me and say your family is falling apart, I will use the same Bible and take the same approach. If a pastor brings his deacons to me and says the church is falling apart, I will use the same Bible. If you bring the White House and the Congress to me, I'm not changing books.

See, we've got Christians and preachers who are changing books. The Bible says in Romans 13 that God created government, and every ordinance of God is to be applied to government. You don't switch books. The Scripture says, Israel was "without a teaching priest." The Word of God was not the standard.

"Truth is an absolute standard by which reality is measured. When you do not have a divine standard, there is no governance to superintend human opinion."

The third reason God caused distress is that Israel was "without the law." People made up their own rules. Everybody was doing what was right "in their own eyes" like in the Book of Judges, and the same thing is hap-

pening today. We've got no rules, new rules, your rules, my rules. It's my truth; it isn't the truth. Truth is an absolute standard by which reality is measured. When you do not have a divine standard, there is no governance to superintend human opinion.

Throughout the Scripture, whenever God wanted to reorient and reset things, He would disrupt them first. I call this divine disruption. So, either we're on the verge of the Second Coming of Christ, or God is doing a major reset. We have nothing to say about the former because that's in God's hands, but we have everything to say about the latter, and the solution is given to us in 2 Chronicles 15:4: "But in their distress they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him." In other words, He wanted them looking for Him.

As we continue in 2021, we need to be looking for God. We need to prepare for Him to intervene in our lives, in our circumstances and in our world, through fasting and prayer, so He can resolve the distress. In Exodus 33, God offered Moses a great blessing. He said, "Moses, there's the Promised Land. It's flowing with milk and honey." Moses said, "If you don't go, I'm not going." That was a test. Do you want the blessing or the Blesser?

In our days of fasting and prayer, when we feel the pains of hunger, they are to remind us to be hungry for Him. Because when we pursue Him, He is more than enough to meet us at our deepest need.

9/11 was a day that will live in infamy in our country. That's because 19 men from halfway around the world invaded our nation and brought us to our knees. Nineteen men in the name of their god changed our nation forever. If 19 men in the name of the wrong god can change a nation forever, what do you think thousands of men and women who are fully committed to Jesus Christ can do when they are on fire for Him? ©2021 The Urban Alternative

SEARCH from page 1

• Tiffany Varner, director of nursing at Southern University at Shreveport

EX - OFFICIO MEMBERS:

• Domoine D. Rutledge, chairman of the Southern University Board of Supervisors
• Ed Shorty, vice chairman of the Southern University Board of

Supervisors

"I'm pleased to have a very diverse group of well-respected stakeholders to assist the Board in selecting a new leader for the Southern University System," Rutledge said. "This task, in my opinion, dwarfs all others allotted to our charge as a Board, and I wanted new faces, new thoughts, and new ideas such that we can write a new and compelling narrative going forward."

INVESTMENT from page 1

years.

"This is a major industrial investment that will create quality manufacturing jobs while limiting environmental impacts, a goal envisioned by my Climate Initiatives Task Force," Gov. Edwards said. "Carbon capture and sequestration are important to Louisiana's efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions while maintaining jobs and growing our manufacturing base. This project is a clear demonstration of our ability to grow the Louisiana economy while lowering the carbon footprint of industry."

"Blue" products are made using hydrocarbons as a feedstock, with carbon dioxide from

the production process captured for permanent sequestration. Carbon dioxide is recognized as a major source of human-caused emissions contributing to climate change. Carbon capture and sequestration, or CCS, keeps the greenhouse gas out of the atmosphere by capturing it at the production site and storing it in reservoirs far underground.

About 95 percent of the carbon dioxide generated at the Air Products facility will be captured, compressed and transported by pipeline to multiple inland sequestration sites located along a pipeline corridor extending up to 35 miles to the east of the complex. More than five million metric tons per year of carbon dioxide will be permanently sequestered in geologic pore space secured from the State of Louisi-



For the fall 2021 semester, a preliminary total of 7,404 students are currently enrolled at the flagship campus of the Southern University System. This is an overall increase of seven percent from the fall semester of 2020 and a particularly noteworthy 17 percent increase in the number of first-time freshmen currently attending the institution. These numbers include both undergraduate and graduate students.

Southern University continues to see increase in enrollment

Southern University and A&M College continues to enjoy significant enrollment growth that now spans over the past five years. For the fall 2021 semester, a preliminary total of 7,404 students are currently enrolled at the flagship campus of the Southern University System. This is an overall increase of seven percent from the fall semester of 2020 and a particularly noteworthy 17 percent increase in the number of first-time freshmen currently attending the institution. These numbers include both un-

dergraduate and graduate students.

"This steady increase in enrollment is an obvious testament that Southern University continues to stand as a premier institution of higher learning," said Ray L. Belton, president-chancellor of the Southern University System and chancellor of Southern University and A&M College. "It is also a testament that students look to Southern to create and continue legacies that positively impact their families and communities." While Southern continues

to have a majority enrollment of Black students, enrollment has also increased from fall 2020 among several other racial and ethnic groups. This includes a 75 percent increase in students of Asian descent, a 25 percent increase in students of Native American or Alaskan Indian descent, and a 15 percent increase in students of Hispanic descent.

Students come from 40 states in the U.S., including Louisiana, with 63 parishes represented. Nearly 30 countries are also represented in this fall class. With the given enrollment growth, Southern is well-positioned for target goal attainment as indicated in the campus strategic plan.

Southern was recently named among the top 20 Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

MOVEBR: Making Transportation and Information Accessible to All

Baton Rouge, LA – October 13, 2021 – The MOVEBR program includes 21 ADA transition projects totaling \$10 million to help build a more accessible transportation network in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Now the MOVEBR website, movebr.brla.gov, is also more accessible to people living with disabilities through a tool that modifies the screen based on individual needs.

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome said the MOVEBR program includes proj-

ects to improve existing pathways, sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks and associated facilities, and all new capacity projects will be built ADA compliant.

"We're not only building better to safely accommodate everyone, but we also upgraded the MOVEBR website so that it is fully accessible to individuals with a variety of abilities. You can visit our website to follow all MOVEBR projects and the progress of the program," Mayor Broome explained.

Of the 21 ADA projects

approved by voters, 10 are underway this year. These projects will transition existing pathways, sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks, and associated facilities into a more accessible transportation network for all types of users.

Work will include the rehabilitation of existing sidewalks for proper width and slopes, the rehabilitation of existing sidewalk ramps at intersections for proper slope, orientation and detectable warnings, the installation of some corner extensions to provide adequate ramp slope and reduce the

distance for crossing the roadway, and the adjustment of pedestrian signal pushbuttons to the proper orientation and height location.

The ADA projects below are under contract for design with work underway on Fuqua Street, Clayton Street, Fairfields Avenue, Chippewa Street, Winbourne Avenue and Beech Street. It is anticipated that the first ADA projects will be let for construction later this year.

See MOVEBR, on page 8

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Louisiana schools consider lengthening academic calendars, adding extra instruction time

School superintendents say they're seeing positive results from adjustments

by JC Canicosa, courtesy of Louisiana Illuminator

The fall 2021 semester hasn't been any easier for Webster Parish public schools than the 2020 school year.

Webster Parish Superintendent Johnny Rowland said his schools had the highest positive COVID-19 rates and more quarantined students, faculty and staff during the first four weeks of this fall than at any other point of the pandemic.

"We are far from being out of the woods with COVID-19 and its ramifications," Rowland said during a Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting Tuesday.

To address the learning loss, Rowland said he took four weeks from summer vacation — which is now seven weeks long for Webster Parish public school students — and added them to the school year.

"What we have done now is break the (school) year up into nine week blocks, followed by an intercession period... to provide an intervention time there, instead of waiting until the summer," he said.

On Tuesday, many of those school system leaders — like Rowland — told the state school board how they used state dol-



As of last week, eight states had prohibited school districts from setting mask requirements, according to a tally by Education Week, with lawsuits winding through the court system in several of those states. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia require masks be worn in schools.

lars allocated to them to address learning loss from the coronavirus pandemic.

"We identified the 50 schools in the state that saw the most significant decreases in mastery levels and the 50 schools in the state that saw the most significant increase in unsatisfactory numbers... and set aside dollars for those schools," Louisiana State Superintendent Cade Brumley said.

Over \$5 million was allocated to those schools in total, Brumley said.

Students across the board felt the effects of learning loss after the majority went through virtual or semi-virtual learning throughout the pandemic.

More Louisiana students in grades 3 through 8 and high

school performed at an "unsatisfactory" level in math and English during the COVID-19 pandemic school year compared to the last full school year before the pandemic, according to assessment data from the education department.

Some systems like Webster Parish schools adjusted their academic calendar, while systems like Jefferson Parish schools implemented more after-school programs and free tutoring for their students.

Laura Roussel, chief academic officer of Jefferson Parish schools, said the allocated funds have allowed her school system to "implement a more robust, more strategic after-school acceleration program for their early-literacy efforts for students

in grades K through 3rd."

"We saw promising results," Roussel said.

St. John the Baptist Parish Public School District Superintendent Dr. Lynett Hookfin said they also used the funds to provide for additional instruction time in the academic calendar and "intervention plans" for learning loss.

Patrick Jenkins, superintendent of the St. Landry Parish School District, said they will use allocated funds to provide for before-and-after school programming and tutoring for K-4 students who experienced learning loss.

"We've already begun identifying those students," Jenkins said.

Louisiana's score on ACT college test falls for another year

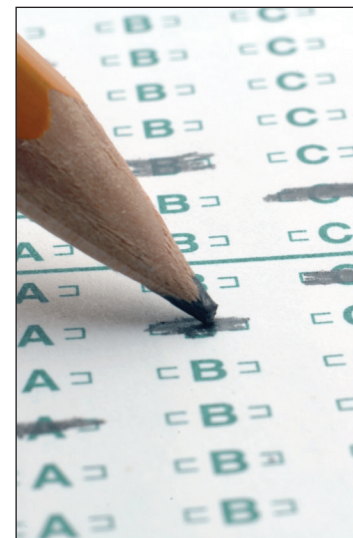
BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The average score of Louisiana's high school seniors on the ACT college readiness test fell for a fourth year in a row and remains among the lowest in the nation.

The state's composite score on the ACT exam that measures skills in English, reading, math and science was 18.4 out of a possible 36, down from 18.7 last year. The Advocate reports that only Mississippi, Nevada and Hawaii scored lower.

The national average is 20.3, a decline from 20.6 last year and the lowest average score in more than a decade.

Only 20% of test takers in Louisiana met the national benchmarks in math and 23% in science, according to the results. In reading, 31% met the national standards and 48% in English.

In Louisiana, 98% of high school seniors took the test, among the highest rates in the nation. Edu-



cation leaders often suggest the state should only be compared to others with similar test-taking rates. By that benchmark, Louisiana ranks 13th of 15 states where 75% or more students took the ACT.

MOVEBR from page 7

- Fuqua St. / Gracie St. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Clayton St. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Fairfields Ave. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Chippewa St. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Winbourne Ave. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Beech St. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Evangeline St. (West) Area ADA Transition Project
 - Mohican St. Area ADA Transition Project
 - Hollywood St. Area ADA Transition Project
- Using a new accessibility tool, the MOVEBR website can

be customized using a blue and white icon located on each page to help make information accessible to people living with disabilities.

For example, for vision impaired viewers, the font size, color, contrast, alignment, and other features can be enhanced. The site can be adjusted for people with cognitive disabilities such as autism or dyslexia and offers an ADHD profile that reduces distractions and helps with focus. A seizure-safe profile reduces motion, animation, and risky color combinations, and viewers with motor disabilities can set a profile to use the keyboard to navigate the website.

Learn more or sign up to follow MOVEBR's ADA projects at: movebr.brla.gov/ADA

FDA Gives Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 Vaccine Full Approval

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"SAFE AND EFFECTIVE"

The Covid-19 vaccine from Pfizer joins a list of approved vaccines Americans have been safely using — like measles and chicken pox — to eradicate disease over the past decades. Billions of doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered worldwide.

To find out where you can get your COVID-19 Vaccine, go to covidvaccine.la.gov or call the Vaccine Hotline at **1-855-453-0774**.

BRING BACK LOUISIANA

FDA Approved Vaccines for Safe Use

- ✓ MMR – Mumps, Measles and Rubella
- ✓ Polio
- ✓ Smallpox
- ✓ COVID-19

"This vaccine is now fully FDA approved because it has been tested and re-tested and found to be safe and effective."

